

Beyond the Horizon




From left, LTC Darrin C. Ricketts and LTC Donn H. Hill of 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, and BG John Uberti, deputy commanding general of Afghan Development, 101st Airborne, confer with an Afghan national army commander in April about Operation Overlord, a joint effort that pushed Taliban forces out of the Naka district of Paktika Province, Afghanistan, and denied them exit through the mountainous terrain.

Defining Army Core Competencies For the 21st Century

By LTG Robert L. Caslen Jr.
and
LTC Steve Leonard

"We will emphasize our Army's ability to conduct both combined arms maneuver and wide area security—the former necessary to gain the initiative and the latter necessary to consolidate gains and set conditions for stability operations, security force assistance, and reconstruction."

—GEN Martin E. Dempsey, FM 3-0 Operations



After nearly a decade of war, our Army is emerging as a leaner, more decisive force with unique expeditionary and campaign capabilities shaped through a historic period of persistent conflict. At the same time, the effects of globalization and emerging economic and political powers are fundamentally reshaping the global order against a backdrop of mounting competition for shrinking natural resources amid accelerating population growth and climate change.

This rapidly evolving and increasingly competitive strategic security environment has given rise to the manifestation of hybrid threats—combinations of decentralized and syndicated irregular, terrorist and criminal groups that possess capabilities once considered the sole purview of nation-states. As these threats become progressively indistinguishable from one another, our understanding of, and ability to master, full spectrum operations will become the central foundational element to our future success.

U.S. Army/SPC Zachary Burke

Minnesota National Guard and Croatian soldiers prepare to clear a room during training at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Germany. U.S. and multinational troops will deploy to Afghanistan together as part of NATO's International Security Assistance Force.



U.S. Army/SFC Tyrone Walker

The Army Capstone Concept, published in December 2009, and *The Army Operating Concept*, released in August 2010, spurred a conceptual renaissance intended to reestablish the critical link between our concepts and doctrine, forging the framework required to recast our doctrinal body of knowledge for an uncertain future. In his March ARMY Magazine article, GEN Martin E. Dempsey wrote that central to *The Army Operating Concept* is the idea that “success in the future security environment requires Army forces capable of defeating enemies and establishing conditions necessary to achieve national objectives using combined arms maneuver and wide-area security to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative as part of full spectrum operations.” This central idea is applicable across the spectrum of conflict, from peace to war, in offensive, defensive and stability operations. As we translate this idea from concept to doctrine, we are narrowing the focus of our efforts on our ability to successfully conduct both combined arms maneuver and wide-area security, both independently and simultaneously.

Army Core Competencies

... to accomplish these two activities and provide forces capable of achieving speed of action ... we need forces capable of exercising mission command by decentralizing authority to act faster than the enemy.

—GEN Dempsey (ARMY, March 2011)

Through full spectrum operations—simultaneous combinations of offensive, defensive, and stability or civil support operations—Army forces seek to gain and maintain a position of relative advantage. Our ability to successfully conduct full spectrum operations is enabled through the Army's two core competencies—combined arms maneuver and wide-area security. In turn, these core competencies represent very specific and unique capabilities. They are inseparable, intrinsically linked within the context of joint, in-

teragency, intergovernmental and multinational efforts.

Combined arms maneuver is the application of the elements of combat power to achieve a position of physical, temporal or psychological advantage over the enemy. Through combined arms maneuver, Army forces leverage decisive combat power against an enemy to seize the initiative, setting and dictating the terms of action while degrading the enemy's ability to mount a coherent response. Striking along unexpected avenues of approach—when the enemy is unprepared—and in unanticipated ways, we are able to impose our will and set the conditions necessary to resolve the conflict on favorable terms. From our perspective, the initiative is established and preserved; from the enemy perspective, defeat comes swiftly and with purpose.

Wide-area security functions similarly, while denying the enemy such advantages. Through wide-area security, we apply the coercive and constructive capabilities of the force to consolidate gains and to establish conditions on the ground to reestablish a stable and secure environment, address immediate humanitarian concerns, and prepare for the transition of responsibility to a legitimate civil authority. Wide-area security strengthens and reinforces stability, sets the conditions that enable the success of joint, coalition, and other government partners, and provides the foundation for transition.

Wide-area security also supports the ability of Army forces not only to partner with indigenous security forces in order to build their capacity to protect and secure populations, but also to support interagency efforts to build partner capacity by developing and strengthening governance, the economy, the rule of law and other institutions with an eye toward legitimacy. Supported by appropriate policy, legal frameworks and authorities, Army capacity-building efforts focus on leading security force assistance, supporting institutional development and participating in security-sector reform programs. Wide-area security establishes the conditions necessary for these efforts to build positive momentum toward professionalizing and strengthening partner security capacity to integrate, synchronize and sustain operations.

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Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, dismount their vehicle following live-fire training in March on Nightmare Range, South Korea.



U.S. Army/CPL Hong Yoon-ki

Mission Command

We know how to fight today, and we are living the principles of mission command in Iraq and Afghanistan.

—GEN Dempsey (ARMY, January 2011)

Together, combined arms maneuver and wide-area security are underpinned by mission command—"the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of full spectrum operations," as stated in Field Manual (FM) 3-0 *Operations*. Mission command is essential to operational adaptability. It drives initiative and fosters our ability to decentralize authority, allowing our forces to consistently and coherently act faster than the enemy. When confronting hybrid threats, mission command enables the development of adaptive leaders and teams capable of anticipating changes in the environment, recognizing and managing transitions, and accepting risk to create opportunities to exploit the initiative. In a complex and uncertain operating environment, mission command fosters the ability of the force to combine the two core competencies to conduct successful, decisive full spectrum operations.

In January, GEN Dempsey stated that mission command "emphasizes the importance of context and of managing the transitions between combined arms maneuver and wide-area security among offense, defense, and stability operations, and between centralized and decentralized operations." Within the context of these two core competencies, our evolved expression of mission command represents an understanding of conflict informed by nearly a decade of war: Conflict, in its most elemental form, remains a fundamentally human endeavor. In this contemporary expression, mission command acknowledges and underscores the central role of the commander in operations among the people, an essential component to success in the future operating environment.

Initiative, Risk and Opportunity

In today's warfare, as in the past, the force that retains the initiative will win.

—John L. Romjue

Initiative, risk and opportunity are inherently linked within the context of full spectrum operations and are fundamental to successful combined arms maneuver and wide-area security. According to FM 3-0, "When commanders accept risk, they create opportunities to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative and achieve decisive results. Risk is a potent catalyst that fuels opportunity. The willingness to incur risk is often the key to exposing enemy weaknesses that the enemy considers beyond friendly reach." The delicate balance among initiative, risk and opportunity spurs the spirit of the offense

through combined arms maneuver: Successful commanders balance risk and initiative with audacity and imagination to strike at a time and place and in a manner wholly unexpected by enemy forces. This is the essence of surprise, which creates opportunity.

The balance among initiative, risk and opportunity is no less important in wide-area security, though it is more tenuous. In wide-area security, the balance tends to shift toward risk, which assumes increasingly complex dimensions when small units operate in a decentralized manner across widely dispersed areas. With limited resources available to conduct operations across a wide area, commanders must choose the appropriate amount and type of capacity that can be safely pushed to the "tactical edge." This in turn drives a dialogue among leaders at all echelons on how and where to assume risk, and how best to mitigate that risk. For these conversations to occur among leaders, the command climate must engender trust while encouraging candor and conversation.

The Need to Adapt

Nearly 10 years after coalition forces entered Afghanistan in response to the terrorist attacks of 9/11, we face an emerging strategic environment much different from that at the turn of the 21st century. A fundamental shift in the international system produced a phenomenon Fareed Zakaria referred to as "the rise of the rest," characterized by emerging regional powers, a globalized economy and the growing influence of nonstate actors on the world stage. Many believe this marks the emergence of a nonpolar political order in which power is more evenly distributed among regional and global actors, rather than among a handful of nation-states.

As the strategic environment evolves around us, so, too, must we adapt. As we begin to rekindle our basic combat skills and refocus our leader development efforts, we draw on the certainties of our past while preparing for the uncertainties of our future. Our Army's core competencies—combined arms maneuver and wide-area security—reinforce our commitment to full spectrum operations while building on the expertise gained through nearly a decade of war.

